

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Chili Dawg's Foods of Fire

Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Chili Dawg's Foods of Fire Takes New Product to Market

Client Profile:

Chili Dawgs Foods of Fire is a Blair, Nebraska company owned by entrepreneurs Tim O'Dell and his brother Shawn. Chili Dawg's product is Hablemeno, Habanero Pepper Spread, a sweet and spicy spread made from habanero peppers. Hablemeno may be used as a spread for toast or crackers, a glaze on meat dishes, marinade mixes, or a barbecue sauce. Chili Dawgs employs 10 people.

Situation:

Tim O'Dell decided to raise produce on his new acreage and, while experimenting with a new recipe, hit upon the idea for Hablemeno. After numerous friends and relatives encouraged him to market the product, O'Dell founded Chili Dawg's Foods of Fire in 2005 with his brother Shawn. While researching his options on how to start and run a food business, O'Dell ran across an article on Nebraska Manufacturing Extension Partnership's (Nebraska MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, Food Processing Center (FPC) and its entrepreneurial services.

Solution:

O'Dell enrolled in the FPC's nationally recognized Food Entrepreneur Assistance Program (FEAP). As a first step, he attended the Center's 'From Recipe to Reality' workshop. This one-day workshop covers the basics of starting a food business; providing an overview of the marketing, business, and technical aspects that need to be taken into consideration. Following this seminar, O'Dell had a personal consultation with FEAP Manager Jill Gifford and Product Developer Bethany Jackson. Subsequently, he continued into the next step of FEAP, 'From Product to Profit,' which consisted of one-on-one technical and business development assistance over an extended period of time to create a market-ready product. O'Dell received professional assistance in designing the product label in compliance with FDA regulations, developing marketing materials, customizing the recipe formulation for mass production, and various other related services. Additionally, Nebraska MEP conducted a national search to locate a contract manufacturer for the Hablemeno.

The close assistance of the FPC throughout the development process was invaluable in navigating the regulatory hurdles and getting O'Dell's product to market. Hablemeno is currently available in ten convenience stores, grocery stores, and specialty stores primarily in Iowa and Nebraska, and is available on their website. O'Dell has also developed and released two new sauces, Strawbanero and Rasbanero, which debuted for the 2009 holiday season.

Results:

- * Increased sales by \$10,000.
- * Projected sales increase of \$50,000.

Testimonial:

www.mep.nist.gov



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"The FPC was very instrumental in relaying to us all of the specifics needing to be considered when introducing a new food product to the market. From formula finalization, to selecting a co-packer, developing a marketing plan and working with stores, the FPC was there to answer our questions and provide us with information necessary to be successful. We would not be there without the FPC."

Tim O'Dell, Co-Owner